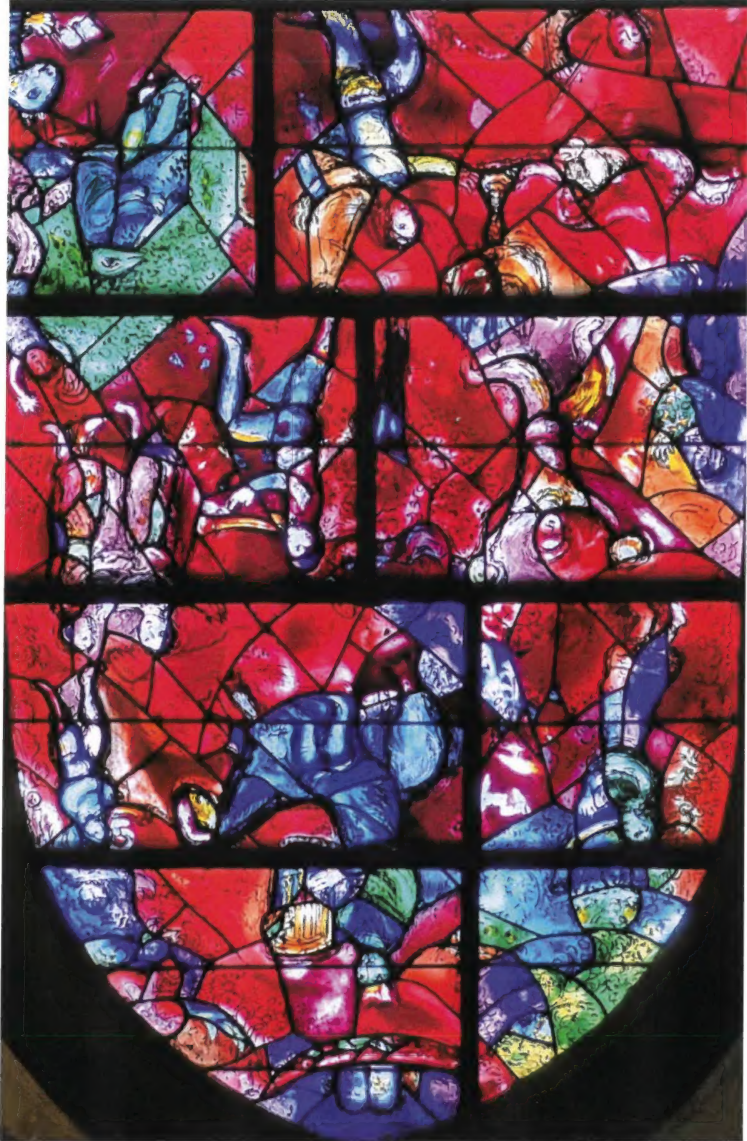


2022 - 2023



IPSWICH CHAMBER CHOIR



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CONCERTS AND EVENTS

13th December 2022

Christmas Crackers

Messiah excerpt and carols

Tuesdays 3rd & 10th January 2023

Taster Rehearsals

St John Passion

10th February 2023

ICC Members & Supporters Quiz night

In support of The Bach Passion project

Saturday 25th March 2023

J S Bach St John Passion

Saturday 10th June 2023

Opera Gala: Songs of the sea

Peter Grimes, Billy Budd, Idomeneo, The Pirates of Penzance, The death of Klinghoffer, The flying Dutchman, Pinafore, The Wreckers.

Saturday 18th November 2023

Winter Dreams

12th December 2023 (tbc)

Christmas Crackers

Charpentier Midnight Mass and carols

Saturday 16th March 2024

J S Bach St Luke Passion

Saturday 15th June 2024 (tbc)

Steve Dobrogosz Mass and Jazz numbers

Saturday 5th April 2025

J S Bach St Matthew Passion

*For details and tickets please go to
www.ipswichchamberchoir.org.uk*

IPSWICH CHAMBER CHOIR

Sopranos:

Glynis Buckmaster, Zara Chancellor, Kate Collins Rice, Libby Cotton, Penny Dawe, Maureen Garratt Simpson, Judy Gillis, Jenny Haxell, Shirley Ingham, Viola Jones, Susan Kodicek, Marian Lanyon, Harriet Llewellyn, Caroline Palmer, Alison Poustie, Olive Powell, Marian Stephens, Emma Kate Thompson.

Altos:

Pamela Browne, Susan Conquer, Jane Fenoulhet, Rebecca German, Dorrie Giles, Philippa Gordon-Gould, Patricia Grimwade, Kate Helleur, Elizabeth Hopkins, Camilla Keeble, Carol Scotland, Belinda Shave, Christine Westren, Sue Wiltshire.

Tenors:

Katie Barnes, David Davies, Richard Hopkins, Moira Usher.

Basses:

John Brooke Smith, John Buckmaster, Mike Cooper, Bob Cowlin, Martin Favell, Peter Finlay, Richard Gaskell, Terence Gausson, Andrew Holland, Ray Loveridge, Andreas MacFarlane, John Plunkett, Martin Stevens, Chris Yule.

Good evening and welcome to the first concert in our 2022/23 season. This season sees the choir back to its busy best with five events throughout the year ranging from the epic *St John Passion* (continuing our relationship with international stars *Amici Voices* and *Geldart Ensemble*) to the delights of our 'Christmas Crackers' concert next month. Our repertoire will include turbulent operatic sea scenes by John Adams, Mozart, Smyth, Britten, and Wagner, as well as the transcendent tranquillity of tonight's programme.

POWERED UP PLAINCHANT

Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986)
Quatre Motets sur des thèmes grégoriens (1960)
Ubi caritas
Tota pulchra es
Tu es Petrus
Tantum ergo

Frank Martin (1890-1974)
Messe pour double chœur a cappella (1922-26)
Kyrie
Gloria
Credo
Sanctus
Agnus Dei

Eric Whitacre (1970-)
Sainte-Chapelle (2013)
Alleluia (2011)

This evening presents three composers from the mid-20th and early 21st centuries whose music has been shaped by the ancient repertoire of plainchant. This music was the exclusive form of Christian church music until the ninth century and the introduction of polyphony and, as tonight shows, remains imbedded in the identity of Christian sacred music to this day. Its defining features include non-metric rhythm, non-major/minor harmonies, a lack of accompaniment, and a responsorial/antiphonal performance practice. All of these come together to create a beautiful, sonorous architecture that rarely fails to transport its listeners – something we hope to achieve this evening.

We start with *Durufle's* setting of the antiphon for Maundy Thursday *Ubi caritas et amor* ("Where charity and love are"). Durufle had not long finished writing his famous Requiem when he wrote these four motets and dedicated them to the Gregorian Institute of Paris. Both works take extended direct quotes of plainchant and reframe them in a rich late-Romantic, Parisian Organist's soundworld. In *Ubi Caritas* it is the altos who have the plainchant tune – singing it antiphonally to each other a line at a time from Choir 1 to Choir 2. Without harmony or rhythm, plainchant melodies must use tessitura to create climaxes and we see this in the middle of *Ubi Caritas* as the sopranos join to sing the tune at higher pitch before leaving the altos to conclude with a long melismatic 'Amen'.

Martin spent some time living in Paris too and will surely have been aware of the liturgical musical scene that Durufle was such a part of. He also spent time in Zurich and Rome before eventually settling where he was born, in Geneva. The Kyrie of his Mass – along with the Gloria, Sanctus, and Benedictus – was written in 1922. He did not complete the Credo until 1924 and the Agnus Dei was essentially a stand-alone movement written in 1926. None of the movements however were performed until well into the 1960s. Martin wrote "At this time in my life I didn't know a choral conductor who might have been interested in the work... The Mass was, at that time, a matter entirely between God and Myself." Today, however, it is one of the most popular a cappella works and is in the repertoire of many ambitious choirs. It is the altos from both choirs once again that open the work. Martin, though, does not quote existing plainchant but instead creates his own lines in a plainchant style. The melodic writing is mainly pentatonic and syllabic, using melismas to highlight important words (such as the opening Kyrie). The rhythms for these lines are largely simple and undulating, passing between the two choirs much like the cantor and choir relationship in Gregorian Chant. Martin sets only the two words Kyrie Eleison (Lord Have Mercy) for some 60 bars containing ever richer arches of colour until – after the sopranos hit their top B – the music escalates through 'Christ have Mercy' before closing with a long contemplative melisma in the first altos.

Tota Pulchra es is for upper voices only and conjures the beauty of Marian devotion with the top sopranos opening the work with the first nine notes of a melody for the feast of the immaculate conception. This passage acts as a refrain appearing again both in the middle and at the piece's conclusion. Martin opens his Gloria not by mimicking plainchant but by playing with its melodic intervals. Instead of having one long line which moves by step as he did in the Kyrie, what happens if you sustain each note of that line as it develops until

you build up a tone cluster? A compositional question that we will hear Eric Whitacre ask a lot in his pieces this evening. Martin paints this arc twice, each time climaxing, then resolving the harmony quietly. The rest of the Gloria is then quite a kaleidoscopic mix of voice parts coming in and out of the foreground as music is passed between the sections of both choirs in duets and trios, calls and responses, solos and accompaniments. The choir I sopranos dance through a long melismatic Amen with a Baroque level of semiquavers, but then, just like the start, Martin repeats the section of text again and closes with a second, almost perfunctory, soft Amen.

The first half closes with Sainte-Chapelle by the contemporary American phenomenon Eric Whitacre. Although he has a deep association with choral composing, he has long resisted writing sacred liturgical music. This changed after his three year residency at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge where he regularly came to hear the choir sing services and was composer in residence. This also happened to be the time when I was singing with the choir and how I first met and worked with him. As well as singing Evensong, Sidney choir also sang the much older monastic office of Vespers once a week which was laced with plainchant. This soundworld seems to have been the one that has lodged itself in Whitacre's music and is most audible in Sainte-Chapelle – a work written for the 40th anniversary of those wonderful performers of early music: The Tallis Scholars. It opens (like the Martin Kyrie) with an invented plainsong idiom circling around and back to a single pitch though getting increasingly smudged by lingering dissonances which seem to be Whitacre almost composing in the long acoustic of Gothic architecture. The experience of the light, architecture, and glass in Sainte-Chapelle is almost a sensory overload and we hear Whitacre turning up the brightness of his harmony so that plainchant style becomes technicolour. The text too is an imagined ancient language – poetry by Silvestri translated back into Latin mixing elements of the Mass text with narrative.

The second half opens with the one minute firework Tu es Petrus which fixates on the opening three pitches of the plainchant setting Jesus' words to Peter. These notes pendulum back and forward from one single pitch which Durrill layers up. He takes his lead from the rhythmic freedom of plainchant to make the music dance through constantly changing time signatures of 2s, 3s, 4s, and 5s, climaxing almost as soon as the music has got started.

The profession of faith that is the Credo often provokes composers to great extremes in the depiction of Christ alongside the devoutness of

belief. Possibly as a result of it being the movement that he came back and finished later, there is a much greater sense of two independent choirs in this movement swinging the narrative and emotional drama from one to the other. The Sanctus which follows it builds up its opening texture much like Whitacre's setting of the word in Sainte-Chapelle – rocking bell-like sonorities with fluid but un-fussy rhythms. The opening section of the Sanctus is one long ratcheting up of excitement and energy which is released in the fabulous Hosanna which dances in 5 in a bar back and forward between the choirs. This is answered by a far more sombre setting of the Benedictus in three completely independent layers. It opens establishing the bottom layer of monk-like chant in choir 2 on top of which is sung by choir 1 a spicy organum-inspired harmony intoning the word Benedictus in parallel 4ths. Eventually the top layer is added as both choirs' sopranos split and toss the word Benedictus to each other with a rhythmic energy that seems more funky than its plainchant lines suggest. This then segues in the Mass's biggest climax – a one page shout for joy on the word hosanna with every voice right at the very top of its range.

The last of Duruflé's motets - *Tantum Ergo* – provides a big contrast with the drama of the Benedictus. It has the plainchant in full sung by the sopranos supported by lower voices providing a texture that is part hymn, part polyphony. I like to think that Duruflé found this melody too beautiful to do anything with other than provide context for.

Martin's *Agnus Dei* also closes a work with a return to a focus on presenting the beauty of melodic line in a contemporary harmonic wash. The vast majority of the choir slowly intones the text in repeating crochets which over several minutes rise two octaves in waves that ebb and flow. Over the top of this an invented plainchant-inspired melody is spun with an almost operatic style of emotional drama. The choir eventually sink back down to a single low E over which the semi-chorus float the last iteration of the text before all come together in the warm embrace of the words 'grant us peace'.

We close tonight's programme with Whitacre's *Alleluia* which was written for us members of Sidney Sussex Chapel Choir during his residency. It sets only a single word, but with such drama – using the simplicity, repetition, alternation of solo and response, the building up of harmonies, and the use of tessitura to create peaks in the sound that all flow directly from the thousand year old repertoire of gesture that comes from plainchant. We really hope that you enjoy this performance and that we see you again soon at one of our future concerts.

MUSIC DIRECTOR Benedict Collins Rice



Known for his 'passionate, insightful, and inspiring conducting', Benedict has performed throughout Europe and America (from The Royal Albert Hall to Carnegie Hall); recorded for several record labels, for BBC and NBC Television, the BFI, and broadcast live on Radio 3. Originally from Oxfordshire, he held two conducting scholarships whilst at Cambridge University before continuing his studies with the heads of conducting at the Royal College of Music, Royal Northern College of Music, the Vienna University of Music, and Birmingham University - where, studying under Simon Halsey, he gained the course's highest ever conducting mark.

Benedict is founder and artistic director of The Facade Ensemble - a dynamic collective of young professionals specialising in 20th century chamber music whose performances are noted for their 'liberal seasoning of vivacity and wit'. Benedict follows in the footsteps of Holst and Tippett in holding the post of Lecturer & Choir Tutor at Morley College. He conducts the West Kent County Youth Orchestra, Ipswich Chamber Choir, Moving Chamber Choir, Stowmarket Choral, Mid Norfolk Singers, and will take over from Nigel Perrin with the Bath Bach Choir in January. Often in demand as a guest conductor, this coming season he makes his debut with the St Alban's Symphony Orchestra and Farnborough Symphony Orchestra. Previous highlights include working with the Berlin Sinfonietta, assisting with the BBC Concert Orchestra, and conducting the Southbank Sinfonia and British Youth Opera directed by Keith Warner.

Benedict also works with several opera companies including Rose Opera and All Aboard Opera in projects ranging from large-scale Wagner productions to a Choose-Your-Own-Adventure version of Dido.

ASSISTANT MUSIC DIRECTOR

William Baldry

William leads a busy life as a musician based in Suffolk. He is Organist and Assistant Director of Music at St Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich, Assistant Music Director of Ipswich Chamber Choir, Assistant Music Director of Stowmarket Choral, Visiting Music Teacher of organ at Ipswich School and a busy freelance accompanist and teacher.

As an organist, William has performed live on BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 4 and has appeared on BBC 1's Songs of Praise. He has toured extensively to the USA and Europe with numerous choirs, performing in the Cathedrals and Churches of Paris, Munich, Salzburg, Prague, New York, Washington, Los Angeles and San Francisco. William has performed for recordings on the Hyperion, Convivium and Acclaim labels as well as on St Mary-le-Tower's Christmas album, 'The Road to Bethlehem' which was Classic FM's 'Drive Discovery' for five days in December 2021.

William studied music, and held an organ scholarship, at Royal Holloway, University of London working closely with the renowned Choir of Royal Holloway. He has previously held posts at Rochester Cathedral, Tewkesbury Abbey, King's School, Rochester and Dean Close School, Cheltenham. Regularly in demand as a continuo player, William has performed on harpsichord and organ for many major choral works including Bach St Matthew Passion, Mass in B minor, Christmas Oratorio, Handel Messiah, Four Coronation Anthems, Haydn The Creation, Mozart Requiem and Vivaldi Gloria.



The Bach Passion Project

4 Passions in 4 Years

This project is at the heart of ICC's ambitious programme to celebrate coming together to rehearse and perform satisfyingly challenging music to live audiences again. We are given meticulous preparation in rehearsal and sensitive and unerring guidance in performance by our inspirational conductor Benedict Collins Rice.

We are thrilled to have soloists from Amici Voices and Rachel Stroud's Geldart Ensemble alongside for the entire project.

"Amici Voices spend their time immersed in the world of the Baroque. They were founded for a performance of Bach's John Passion 10 years ago and revel in bringing this music to life as it might have been heard by contemporary ears. As the name suggests community and friendship are at the heart of our music making, and we are delighted to collaborate with Ipswich Chamber Choir and Benedict Collins Rice for this inspirational project."

Helen Charlston, Mezzo-soprano Amici Voices, BBC New Generation Artist

"It's a privilege and a delight for The Geldart Ensemble to be joining Ipswich Chamber Choir for this exciting musical venture. The opening bars of the final movement of our performance of Bach's B minor Mass in 2019 was a rare moment of pure musical magic that will always stay with me, and I'm looking forward to creating many more magical moments throughout the course of this project"

Rachel Stroud, Leader, The Geldart Ensemble

Saturday 25th March 2023

St John Passion

Saturday 16th March 2024

St Luke Passion

Saturday 5th April 2025

St Matthew Passion

ICC Friends and The Bach Passion Project

“Doing 4 Bach Passions is one thing: spending 4 years in the company of Amici Voices, Rachel Stroud’s Geldart Ensemble and of course Ipswich Chamber Choir is going to be bliss. Both groups are among the country’s leading performers of this repertoire.”
Benedict Collins Rice, Music Director

We are fundraising for this exciting project with members taking on The 250 Challenge from 2022.

Please can you help us by joining our Friends’, Patrons’ and Sponsors’ scheme from just £30 a year? Benefits include termly newsletters, complimentary programmes, an invitation to see the choir in rehearsal with Benedict and to round off the season, a Summer Picnic.

2nd April 2022 St Mark Passion

Last Easter we performed the rarely heard St Mark Passion, the first in the series, to a very appreciative audience.

Our soloists from Amici Voices said, “We had a wonderful time and were thrilled with the performance so thank you and congratulations. Looking forward to more!”

The Geldart Ensemble’s Rachel Stroud writes, “Thanks so much for everything on Saturday. Wonderful, intelligent and clear directing, as always from Benedict. Lots of the performers have messaged to say how much they enjoyed playing the St Mark and what a lovely occasion it was. It really was a pleasure to bring this music to life with Ipswich Chamber Choir! I’ve already sent my players the dates for the next three!!”

Your help is vital and much appreciated

We are grateful to the following ICC Friends, Patrons,
Bach Circle members and to anonymous donors

Bach Circle: Douglas and Libby Cotton

Hugh Steavenson

Pamela and Cavan Browne

Patron:

Chris Stephens

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Lucy Robinson,

Bernard & Christine Westren,

Please become a friend for just £30 a year to help fund our outstanding professional musicians. Please speak to us at the Friends' Desk to leave your name, ask about benefits or join here:

www.ipswwichamberchoir.org.uk

If you'd like to sponsor one of the musicians please join The Bach Circle.



St Mark Passion 2nd April 2022



Young Musicians

We offer free membership with valuable benefits to under 25 year olds keen to develop their musicianship and choral singing skills. An inspirational conductor, our professional Music Director Benedict Collins Rice is also a gifted teacher. Rehearsals are masterclasses in vocal technique and insight into the music. Individual support with exams, auditions or applications can be arranged while you are an ICC apprentice.

Ask for details! ipswichchamberchoir@gmail.com



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telephone: 01473 253666



WOODBRIDGE VIOLINS

Tickets for our concerts are available from choir members or at

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Suffolk
IP12 4LU
01394 383150

J S Bach
St John Passion

Saturday 25th March 2023

St Mary-le-Tower Church

Ipswich

at 7.00pm

With International Performers

Amici Voices and The Geldart Ensemble
“...both groups among the country's
leading performers of this repertoire”

Tickets £20, students £5, 18 & under free



Johann Sebastian Bach



IPSWICH CHAMBER CHOIR
Benedict Collins Rice - Conductor

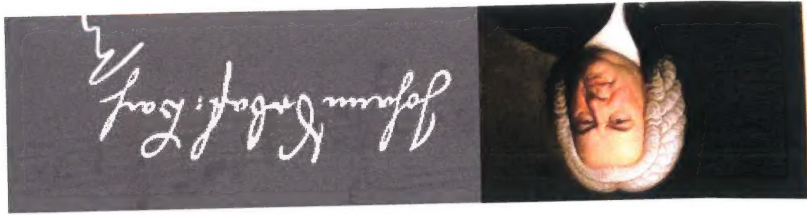
The Bach Passion Project

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Saturday 16th March 2024 **St Luke Passion**

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